CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a brief description of the entire contents of the research. In detail, this chapter presents the research background, research questions, research objectives, research significances, research framework, and previous research.

A. Background

This research is intended to foster Indonesian English Foreign Language (EFL) young learners' questioning attitude as part of critical thinking skill through Indonesian folklores by engaging them in constructive learning. The research is essential to conduct, considering critical thinking is vital in education and daily life. Pardede (2019) states that the inadequate development of critical thinking (CT) is spotted in Asian countries. Tung & Chang (2009) write down three leading causes of the issue in the Asian context. First, in their earlier learning, learners mainly acquired reproduction-oriented learning activities. This condition made them rarely have the opportunities to question, explain, or evaluate the knowledge given in the classroom. Second, primary and secondary school teachers received neither scant guidance nor support related to critical thinking strategies. Their opportunity to incorporate critical thinking into curricula is also underprivileged by their teaching load and limited time. Lastly, learners are more familiar with and accustomed to a kind of a collectivist society; this makes them lack the individual voice required in critical thinking. Those several factors above make the development of CT in Asian EFL learners seems to be more challenging.

In the Indonesian context, the development of CT is not seriously sustained in both primary and secondary education. Facts also show that Indonesian people are easily misled by fake news (Kurniawati et al., 2020). It is caused by their incomprehension to analyze and evaluate the information. To anticipate this issue, CT

should be taught in classroom. CT helps students to responsibly and passionately participate in the learning process by questioning, analyzing, criticizing, synthesizing, and evaluating (Pardede, 2019). Vdovina & Gaibisso(2013) states that CT relates to EFL learners' thinking quality in the educational context. It also supports their ability to interact with people, get new knowledge, and deal with ideas, beliefs, and attitudes. This quality of thinking becomes an essential need to argue, analyze, and make a decision in their lives (Hashemi et al., 2014).

Mahmud (2015) explores that in the process of thinking critically, teachers' role should not only examine questions to learners and demand learners to respond to those questions as a vehicle for learners' critical thinking. Instead, teachers also should have the ability to invite their learners' questions as a strategy to foster and develop their critical thinking. Questioning means thinking, and thinking is a manifestation in the form of questions (Santoso et al., 2018). Equally, Lipman's "Philosophy for Children" program utters the use of stories as potential in developing critical thinking skills to prepare them for participation and engagement as active, critical, and ethical citizenry in the future (Lipman, 2003; Shek, 2017). To promote questioning as part of critical thinking skill in young learners, Indonesian folklores can be used to facilitate the learning process. It is by considering the fact that the use of Indonesian folklores may generate curiosity among students that can construct thinking skill due to the controversy in the folklore. The controversy is viewed as illogical things that are allowed to meet the requirements for the controversial topics because the unreasonable nature of folklore could fabricate questions, doubt, and concern from students (Kurniawati et al., 2020).

Based on an interview with an English junior high school teacher in Bandung, she found out that most of the students tend to be passive in the learning process. They perceive English as one of the most challenging subjects at school. English is considered a new skill for them because it is no longer learned as one of the core subjects at the Primary School level. English was removed by the Ministry of Education

and Culture in the 2013-2014 school year. The goal is for elementary school students to improve their mastery of the Indonesian language first. Meanwhile, the material lesson in the first grade of junior high school cannot be categorized as basic English for them. They still struggle to know and memorize basic vocabulary. The explanation shows that the classroom learning process still performs traditional teaching-learning, which tends to be passive learning. Students' critical thinking will not foster or develop if the learning process between teacher and students is less interactive. Thus, to anticipate the problem, the teacher and students should engage and participate actively to make the process of learning becomes meaningful.

In fostering critical thinking using Indonesian folklores, the classroom ambiance should be proper for learning. According to Ramírez (2008) and Sternberg (2010), schools are obliged to educate children to solve the problem creatively and independently; it leads educators to seek and improve other methods that allow carrying out teaching and learning processes that are able to stimulate creativity. Sternberg (2010) suggests that the constructive educational model can help foster creative and critical thinking skills. As the focus of this research, constructive learning (CL) advocates a participatory approach in which learners actively participate in learning (Fernando & Marikar, 2017). Examining constructive learning is essential to gain a more refined understanding of the experiences and processes by which learners and teacher construct learning (Kostiainen et al., 2018). The core of constructive learning is the learners are active participants in the learning process, and the teacher's valuable role as a facilitator in facilitating the learning process with the learners (Fernando & Marikar, 2017).

There are several research relevant to the current research. The first research is carried out by Kurniawati et al. (2020), depicting the implementation of Critical Literacy Pedagogy (CLP) on how it fosters learners' critical thinking skill in comprehending Indonesian folklore controversy. The second research by Yoedo & Mustofa (2022) explore how five English teachers employ Indonesian folklores to

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develop young learners' analytical and critical reasoning skills to help them grasp the moral value of Indonesian folklores. The other research is conducted byIstiq'faroh et al. (2020); it explores the effect of Indonesian folktales on fourth-grade students' reading comprehension and motivation.

To differentiate the current research from the three previous research above, it explores how Indonesian folklores can foster young learners' questioning attitude as part of critical thinking while engaging them in constructive learning.

B. Research Questions

From the observation above, the researcher formulates the problems of this research as follows:

1. How is the process of constructive learning using Indonesian folklores to promote EFL young learners' questioning attitude?

2. How are the young learners' questioning attitudes as a part of critical thinking shown during the process?

C. Research Objectives

Based on the background of the research, the purposes of the research are directed to assert:

1. To describe the process of promoting constructive learning using Indonesian folklores.

2. To depict young learners' questioning attitude when discussing Indonesian folklores.

D. Research Significances

Theoretically, the result of this research is prospected to be meaningful for a curriculum planner as the new alternative way to enhance English language program of higher quality.

Practically, the research gives significance to:

1. Teachers

    This research enriches teachers' pedagogical knowledge. It supplies information for teachers to improve strategies and the quality of the learning process in fostering young learners' critical thinking skill.

2. Students

    This research encourages young learners' bravery to evaluate by asking about the information rather than keeping their indecision in mind. Further, it stimulates their critical thinking skill to emerge and develop because it is an essential skill in the 21st century. Equally, they are prepared for the changing demands of the world.

E. Research Framework

Young learners are a distinct group of learners (Shek, 2017). According to Phillips (1996), young learners are children entering the formal school from five or six to twelve years old. Kang (2014) states that young learners are a group of formal students ranging from seven to twelve years old.Teale & Sulzby (1989)show us young learners' portrait as literacy learners with four essential characteristics: first, they begin to read and write in early life; second, they observe and participate in authentic real-life world settings; third, their ability to read and write develop concurrently in interconnected ways and eventually, they construct their knowledge by actively engaging with learning materials.

To support young learners in developing their knowledge construction by actively engaging with learning materials, CT is employed in the learning process because CT is an active process that is started by the active accumulation of information that ends with well-reasoned decisions (Florea & Hurjui, 2014). Critical thinking is the ability to state personal thoughts in an organized well way. Critical thinking helps students understand how they see themselves and the world and relate to others (Cole & McGuire, 2012). When young learners ask "why," it signals their reluctance to receive a simple explanation, they can be considered critical thinkers (Murray, 2022).

Further, young learners' "thirst for facts" is presented during their questioning (Sully, 1896). Engel (2011) says that young learners' questioning is guided by their natural curiosity: 'the natural need to explain the unexpected, resolve the uncertainty, and comprehend the unknown,' which stimulates exploration. Komatsubara et al. (2018) state that questioning is foundational for self-motivated learning. Hence, developing young learners' questioning and critical thinking could not be operated separately. Due to this reason, the learning process should prepare and facilitate young learners to embrace a questioning attitude to run life inside and outside the classroom (Şeker & Kömür, 2008).

Morever, to stimulate learners' questioning attitude as part of critical thinking skill in the learning process, using literature to teach the skill is necessary (Kurniawati et al., 2020). A recent research demonstrates how primary school teachers employ Indonesian folklores in English subjects to support learners develop their analytical and critical reasoning skills (Yoedo & Mustofa, 2022). The use of Indonesian Folklores is considered eligible for the requirements due to its controversial and unreasonable topic, which may generate questions from learners. In addition, Indonesian folklores are considered as something which is culturally related to Indonesian people's lives in group goals (Kurniawati et al., 2020). Thus, Indonesian Folklores are expected to the media to foster young learners' critical thinking.

In the classroom, young learners would engage in critical thinking and deliberate decision-making when they feel involved or connected effectively with a problem or decision point (Cole & McGuire, 2012). Equally, critical thinking can be carried out through dialogue. Vdovina & Gaibisso (2013) argue that using dialogue while teaching can improve students' thinking ability because they are actively involved, receive feedback, and consider facts and logic in their reasoning. Setting up a classroom to facilitate their curiosity through constructive situations surrounded by meaningful interaction is necessary. According to Novak (2002), it is essential to know how the way learners learn the material in learning and teaching activity. Learners will learn appropriately if they feel connected and related (Vallori, 2014). Learners are engaged in

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meaningful learning if they can make a connection between their experience and faced problems to solve (Cole & McGuire, 2012).

To perform critical thinking in the classroom, learners should actively participate in the learning process. According to Piaget (1967) cited in Suparno (1996), constructive learning is a process in which students of all ages are actively involved in acquiring information and building their knowledge. This means constructive learning help to support critical thinking (Sjøberg, 2010). Constructive learning is derived from the word Constructivism. Constructivism is a learning philosophy based on the premise of reflecting on the experience, building, and constructing knowledge (Gordon, 2008). Constructivism is also considered contextual learning, which defines ability as built by humans little by little, the results of which are extended through a limited and not sudden context (Matengu et al., 2018).

Constructive learning encourages a participatory approach in which learners actively participate in the learning process (Fernando & Marikar, 2017). The main idea of the participatory approach in constructive learning considers that knowledge is actively constructed by learners, not passively received from the outside (Sjøberg, 2010). It means that learners construct their understanding by the cognizing subject, and the function of cognition is adaptive and serves the arrangement of their experience, not the discovery of ontological reality (Florea & Hurjui, 2014).

F. Previous Research

There are several types of research regarding the topics of this research. The first research is carried out by Kurniawati et al. (2020); it provides an alternative model of teaching critical thinking in the Indonesian context. Using Indonesian folklores containing controversy is predicted to enable students to develop their thinking skills and become a study novelty. Critical Literacy Pedagogy (CLP) principles; explaining the author's purpose, activating students' prior knowledge, reading text loudly, discussing the text in a group, and exploring the text in class activities are implemented

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in the learning process. This research employs the case study method. A total of 29 students participated through a non-randomized sampling method. They are a combination of 11th-grade students from science and social studies majors. Three interventions were designed to foster their thinking skills and implement those principles incorporated in the folklore reading class. As a result, the process of incorporating CLP principles in reading class is found to enable Indonesian EFL students to foster their critical thinking skills. The critical thinking skills emerged from the student's ability to recognize the author's purpose and the context of a written text and to think logically. In sum, the CLP principles-based model appears to be an alternative model of teaching critical thinking skills in Indonesia.

The second research is conducted by Yoedo & Mustofa (2022) regarding the use of Indonesian folklores in developing young learners' analytical and critical reasoning skills. This research employs descriptive qualitative research. This research was conducted in a natural setting class. Five English teachers and their students are involved as participants in the research. The investigation shows that the teachers' discussion purpose is that learners can understand the moral message in the folklores as a signal of students' analytical reasoning skill. The folklores are shown through video with English subtitles due to visual media are believed can improve language skill development. The research's outcome also inferred that English translations of Indonesian folktales in the classroom potentially affected students' English language development.

The last research is conducted by Istiq'faroh et al. (2020); it investigates the effect of Indonesian folklores on fourth-grade students. This research is aimed to develop Indonesian indigenous folklores picture books and study their impact on students' reading comprehension and learning motivation. The research employs a quasi-experimental design. A total of 49 fourth-grade students are divided into experimental and control groups. The Reading Comprehension Test (RCT) and the Motivation to Learn Scale (MLS) are administered pre and post-test. The results depict

that experimental group students have a higher score on both dependent variables than their counterparts. This indicates that Indonesian folklores picture books promote students' reading comprehension and motivation of experimental group students compared to control group students.

To sum up, this research is related to the three research above, but the differences between them could be highlighted. The first and second research explore Indonesian folklores in fostering young learners' critical literacy pedagogy and reasoning skill while grasping moral values that appeared in folklores. The third research explores the use of Indonesian folklores picture books in promoting students' reading comprehension and motivation. To differentiate, this research focuses on how learners' questioning attitude as part of critical thinking skill could foster while discussing Indonesian folklores.